

Halo: Hell Frogs Prelude: Zero Hour

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Category: Halo

Genre: Adventure, Drama

Language: English

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2014-07-13 08:29:09

Updated: 2014-09-12 05:14:15

Packaged: 2016-04-27 04:09:32

Rating: T

Chapters: 4

Words: 4,658

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: A group of highly trained ODSs are on the ship, The Pillar of Autumn. The Pillar of Autumn finds Halo, and these brave Frogs must fight for their lives. Will they make it home? This is the first story in an ongoing project. Please leave reviews. I am redoing a story I had attempted before.

1. The frogs have jumped

September, 19th 2552.

The Pillar of Autumn. A grand ship in the UNSC. A legend. Storm "Ace" Belle, a high ranking member of the UNSC Orbital Drop Shock Trooper squadron designated "Hell Frogs" was on this legend. She had been on this ship for weeks now, but it had only seemed like minutes. Upon jumping to a random location via Cole Protocol, Ace had entered a sort of cryogenic sleep. This allowed her body and mind to rest until they reached their destination. This helped preserve food, oxygen, and energy. Now, however, the alarms sounded, and the cryogenic pods were being opened.

Ace felt her shell rise as she regained her senses. She fell out of the pod, and dropped to her knees. She was breathing heavily. Her cold body still had ice covering it. She looked to the left and to the right and saw a few more soldiers come out of their cryo sleep. She then looked back at the cool floor she now knelt on.

Ace was twenty one years old, and a veteran of the Hell Frogs. She was friends with many of the members, most of which had not been deployed to the Pillar of Autumn. Ace had fairly long, straight brown hair, and brown eyes to match. She was underweight, but not overly skinny. She was tall, standing at 6'2", however. It is a wonder she had gotten the nickname "Ace" instead of "Giant".

Over the intercom for the room Ace and the others were in, a raspy voice spoke. "Attention all hands. We will be dropping out of slip space in approximately half an hour. Get ready for anything when we

drop out." The com clicked dead.

Ace wasted no time. She grabbed a robe to cover up, and then moved to the locker room. She took a quick shower, and got dressed. As she was finishing up at her locker, she looked around and saw the rest of her team that had been assigned to the Autumn.

There was Ralph, Frog-08. Ralph was the oldest one in her platoon to be assigned to this mission, at thirty one. He was also in charge, with Ace right under him. He had dark black skin, and rich green eyes. His hair was shaven, on both his head and his face. He looked so serious, just like he always does. Ace liked Ralph, and Ralph liked her. He was a good leader, and Ace was glad Famon had put him in charge.

George, Frog-14, was the slowest in the squad. As Ace glanced over to him, he was only just finishing his cold shower. He had brown eyes, and slicked back light brown hair to boot. He has fair skin, and nervously shakes when not in battle. He had some facial hair circling his mouth, but there was not much of it. This twenty-six year old could get on everybody's nerves, but Ace, as well as the rest of the Frogs knew he was extremely reliable. He would have their back.

Paris, Frog-18, was born and raised, as well as trained, on Reach. She was more-or-less new to the Hell Frog's little squad, only having been around for four months. Already she had quickly escaped the nickname all newbies get, Tadpole, and became a full fledged and honourable Frog. Paris is a twenty-five year old women with white skin, green eyes, and long, wavy light blonde, almost white, hair. She had not spoken much since Reach.

Lastly, there was a new recruit. Daniel Miles. This Tadpole had only just been put on the squad, at the insistence of her friend and commanding officer, Famon Soulth. Daniel was only a kid, eighteen years old. He was white with a decent amount of hair on his head, but no facial hair. Aside from his age and young appearance, he was short and small. Very underweight. He was considered fit enough, and from what Ace had heard, he had a rough past. But that rough past had gotten Daniel the experience all the Frogs have been through, maybe more.

Daniel had the service tag Frog-00. This tag was reserved for special members, like Ace's. With the service tag Frog-02, Ace had a single digit number. Some, like Ralph, got their numbers by being one of the first to join this elite squadron of Helljumpers. Others, like Ace, had been hand selected by Famon because they were the best of the best. The Elite. Ace had been one of those.

Ace finished getting dressed, by putting on a full body black skin-tight suit that all ODST's wore under their armour. She did not need to put on the heavy pieces of metal that comprised of her armour until they were out of slip-space and sure the Covenant had not followed them. The Covenant were an alliance of aliens who the UNSC, or United Nations Space Command, were at war with. They had only just burned Reach to a crisp, harming the moral of the soldiers who got away.

Ace went ahead and went out of the locker room, telling Ralph she would save everyone a seat in the mess hall. They were all pretty

hungry. Ace got into the hall, and got a tray. She sat down with her food, mowing down.

Across the mess hall, Ace got eyes on an ODST with an ONI (Office of Naval Intelligence) emblem on the breastplate. Ace shook in disgust. She was not a big fan of ONI and their methods. Though, nobody who truly knew about them did. Probably not even themselves.

This ONI operative looked different thoughâ€¦ she had a look of despair, of sadness on her face. Ace figured she probably had family on Reach. She was twirling an apple in her hand, and her focus on it was intense. Ace looked back toward the doorway she had entered, and saw Daniel slowly making his way in.

Daniel had, like everybody else in here, no helmet on his head. He had come to eat, and a helmet to watch over would only get in the way. He looked sad, Ace could clearly see tears forming in his eyes. For his few months in the military, life had been rough.

There had been a battle only a couple of weeks back. Daniel had witnessed a slaughter by the Covenant. All of his squad, his friends, his family were killed. They were killed right in front of him. Ace did not know the full report, but Famon had told her a brief summary of Daniel.

Ace didn't want to baby him, but she did act kinder toward him than others who she barked orders to. She felt a deep passion, almost like a motherly instinct, to protect him. Ace smiled at him. It was a sad smile, seeing this whole situation, but the smile was true. She was glad to have her family here. People she could trust.

"Yo, Daniel!" She calls to him. Daniel looked at her, and made his way over to get his food, then join her. Eventually, Paris, Ralph, and George came in. They all got their trays and sat down.

"Food tastes horrible!" Shouted George.

"What do you expect? It ain't a five star hotel or anything!" Paris responded.

"Shut up you two! Ace, have you talked to Daniel yet? He hasn't spoken a word since I met em". Ralph said.

Ace nodded "no". "Do they have anything good to eat on this ship?" Ace asks, knowing there isn't.

"Nope, all the good stuff is gone. They gave up on loading that stuff aboard."

Suddenly, everyone in the cafeteria went quiet. Out of the window appeared a giant, metal ring.

The ONI operative saw the ring and smiled. "The new killing grounds await."

2. A whole new world

Ace looked out the window at the massive ring.

"What the hellâ€|" She murmurs.

"Everybody to the lockers! Suit up!" Ralph shouts.

Everybody scrambled and ran toward the locker room. Ace followed behind, but halted suddenly. She thought she saw a glimpse of a giant green humanoid. "A Spartan?!" Ace thinks, and runs to the locker room with her squad.

Daniel, Ralph, Paris and George were already suited up. Ace got to her locker, and entered the code. Then, the ship got hit, and everyone fell.

"What is happening?" Paris shouts.

"Covenant followed us after all!" George replies.

Ace bit her teeth together, and was worried. She tried getting into her locker again. She succeeded this time, and started to put on her boots and knee pads. She was only wearing a tight black suit over her body, suitable for putting armour on top of. Her squad wore the same. Only they were all armoured up.

The ship got hit again. Ralph looked at his squad. "No time to finish gearing up, Ace. We gotta move!" He exclaims. Everybody else was in their suit. Ace grunted at the major inconvenience, but she was probably the best on the team, and she was fine without her metal protective plating.

Ace grabbed her helmet, and followed her team out. When they got back into the cafeteria, it was filled with dead human corpses, and aliens. There were Grunts and Elites, which Ace knew how to handle. Ace grabbed a pistol from one of her fallen Marine allies, and started shooting the Grunts in the head. Ralph and Paris were firing their assault rifles at an Elite, George was killing Elites and Grunts with his shotgun, and Daniel had poiced a plasma rifle from a dead Elite and used that to start killing. But there were too many enemies. They had to retreat, and fast.

"Ace, cover us!" Ralph said, and waved his team through a door. Daniel, Paris, George, Ace and then himself all got through, before he closed it and shot the control panel.

"We got new orders. Head for the escape pods. This ship is going down." Ralph said calmly. Ace had always figured that was one reason Ralph got command of missions, he had the best control over himself out of everybody in this little squad. Well, except maybe Ace.

Ace realized she was breathing too fast. She felt her heart pounding, her breathe heavy. She closed her eyes for a split second, and cleared her mind. She quickly got her breathing under control, and looked at her squad.

"Sir!" She replied, and kept her finger on her trigger. She was not paranoid by any means, but in a ship swarming with aliensâ€| she was careful.

Suddenly, she heard footsteps. She was the first to point her weapon at the noise, followed by the rest of the team.

"Calm down, soldier. I am human. No need to be trigger happy." A female voice said.

Great. It was the ONI guy. Or ONI girl. And Ace could tell that she was going to be annoying.

"I am the leader of this team. Ralph, or Frog-08." He told the armoured creep. None of the Frogs went by their surnames, which seemed odd to Ace at first, but she got used to it. Hell, she went by a nickname.

"Shade. Now we can stand around and chat all day, or we can go to the escape pods and, maybe, live to talk about this later?" She retorted. This was the kind of stuff that made Ace hate ONI. That and their secrets. And their experiments. Andâ€¦ well, she guessed she just didn't like them for a lot of reasons.

"I agree. We need to move." Paris said. Ralph nodded, and pointed toward a hallway close to the pods. They all scrambled down it, with Ralph and Shade leading the way. Ace and Paris had the back covered.

Finally, Ace could see one last pod in this section of the ship. Good, they would make it.

"Hall is clear, sir. I haven't seen a Covy since the cafeteriaâ€¦" George commented.

"It is strange, but motion sensors haven't picked anything up in a while." Ralph said, and stepped forward. Ace grabbed his shoulder with her left hand and a grenade with her right. She popped the clip and chucked the grenade down the hallway. Thenâ€¦ steps. Heavy steps.

An Elite came out of active camo, and barrel rolled out of the way. It wore strange, golden armour. It activated its energy sword, and rushed at the team.

Shade was gone. The rest of the frogs opened fire at the creature, and it ducked behind a box before the shielding completely dropped. Ralph slowly advanced, and motioned his squadron to make a break for the escape pods. Ralph jumped beside the crates where the Elite had hiddenâ€¦ and it was not there.

"What theâ€¦" Ralph muttered, and remembered the active camo. His eyes opened wide, and he suddenly felt a slight ping in his stomach. He looked down to see two purple shards of energy piercing out of his chest. He coughed in his helmet, blood hitting the visor. The Elite deactivated the sword, and still remained in his camouflage hiding place.

Ralph fell, dead before he hit the ground.

Paris and George had made it into the escape pod, and Daniel and Ace were right behind. Ace looked over her shoulder to see her CO dead on the floor. She stopped, which was a mistake. The Elite ran toward her, and tackled Ace to the floor.

"Dammit!" She exclaims, and punches the Elite in the face. He growls at her, and punches her in her gut. Ace quickly is out of breathe,

and in pain.

"Might as well make a final move." She thinks, and grabs the Elite's lower left mandible. She rips it off with all of her might, and see's blood gushing onto her helmet from the wound. The Elite stops and screams, but quickly recovers as much as he can anyway, and raises his fist for the killing blow. Suddenly, the purple energy blades that had pierced Ralph now impaled the Elite. They were sticking out of the right lower side of his massive body, and he fell on Ace. He was not dead, but with what the Captain would inevitably do to the ship and the injuries this beast had taken, he did not have much time left.

Ace looked over the Elite to see the ONI agent, extending her hand to Ace. Ace slapped it away, and tried getting up by herself, only to stagger to her knees. Shade then helped Ace up, putting Ace's arm over Shade's neck. Shade then walked the injured ODS to the escape pod.

Ace felt regret for how she had treated the person who had saved her life. She did not, however, apologize. Not to ONI. Even this agent. Ace's hatred for ONI may cost her her life someday, but one thing is for sure. Ace would NEVER show respect to them unless ordered.

"We have to leave!" George shouted as soon as they got into the escape pod.

Shade set Ace down and nodded. She tightened her hand into a fist, and hit the release button.

The Hellfrogs left the Pillar of Autumn.

3. Personal Vendettas

Blackness. There was only blackness. That is what it seemed like to Luka 'Alakavee anyway. The Sangheili minor was known as an un-honourable warrior. The San'Shyuum had placed 'Alakavee in Shipmaster Huskalee's squadren, most likely in hopes that he would perish. Unlike most Sangheili, Luka did not care about honour though. What drove him instead was a much deeper passion.

"Luka! Are you still with us?" A green armoured Sangheili asked him.

Luka looked up from the window to his comrade.

"Space is so empty." Luka muttered.

The green armoured warrior, Alei Komtaree, chuckled.

"Soon, we shall destroy the humans who pose a threat to our sacred ring!" Alei exclaims, getting cheers from the Unggoy.

Luka rolled his eyes. The Unggoy were a pathetic species, and everyone knew it. This pod was holding twice as many of them as there were Sangheili, making six Unggoy and three Sangheili total. There were also two Mgalekgolo, making the pod feel extremely crowded.

Aside from Luka and Alei, there was the shipmaster. Zakl Huskalee. Zakl wore Golden armour, distinguishing him from the other, lesser Sangheili. Luka found that moronic. Huskalee was a legend throughout the Covenant Empire, and Luka should be proud to serve beside him. _Should be._

Suddenly, the pod hit the side of the Human ship known as the Pillar of Autumn. As the pod crashed into it, the doors opened. Alei led the Unggoy out, and was followed by the two massive Mgalekgolo. Luka gave Zakl a look of hatred before jumping out himself. Zakl wanted to make an appearance, most likely, and be the last one out, wielding his Energy Sword. Luka had his sword holstered and had his Plasma Rifle out.

As Luka jumped out, he saw that the others in his pod had already cleared the hallway. There was red blood and dead human soldiers everywhere. Luka did not care about humans one way or the other, unlike most Covenant. Luka's motivation in this fight was his shipmaster. The beast that took everything from Luka and who would soon be dead by Luka's hand.

Luka turned the corner, seeing a split in the hall. There were two dead Unggoy from his pod, but more dead Humans. Luka went the way opposite of Alei, and started to open fire at the Human marines. Many bullets hit Luka's deflective shielding, and bounced back off, slowly lowering his shields. Luka smirked slightly as he sprayed the three Marines with plasma, and they hit the floor. They were dead.

"Shipmaster! Luka! This is Alei. We have cleared the central feeding chamber, but it looks like some troopers evaded us. They are heading toward you, shipmaster. I think they are headed for the escape pods!" Alei shouted, louder than he really should have, through his squadrons communication devices.

"Understood, I shall make sure nobody leaves this ship." Zakl stated.

Luka figured this could be his chance. He would need to head to where Zakl is, and kill him. Honourably or not, Luka did not care. His opportunity had just presented itself.

"This is for you, Sher." Luka says, holstering his Plasma Rifle and drawing his Energy Sword. He then activated his camouflage, right before a few Marines run past. Luka would let them go. They were not his priority.

Luka made his way through the ship, heading to the complete opposite side. On his way, he managed to kill seventeen humans with his sword, and three with his Plasma rifle. He also butted an Unggoy's head in for getting in his way. Ohh, how Luka hated the Unggoy. He really could not think of any good reason to hate them. Not like with Zakl, who had ruined everything for him.

Luka, engulfed by rage, ran even faster down the hallways to his target. He finally arrived at the escape pods. He saw a sword had pierced one of the humans, and they fell to the ground dead. Luka waited in the shadows, waiting to strike.

After killing one of the humans, Zakl charged after the other humans

heading toward the escape pod. A bad idea, as Zakl tackled one of them to the ground. The one Zakl tackled was not wearing armour, unlike the other three. It was only wearing a black suit, with leg plating that went up to its knees, and a helmet. That would make this kill all the easier for Zakl.

The Human punched Zakl in the face, and apparently hard as the shipmaster turned his head slightly in apparent pain. If he knew another had seen him react in such a manner, he would be truly shamed. In retaliation, Huskalee punched the Human in its gut, making the human grunt in pain.

And suddenly, the battle turned unexpectedly in the Humans favour. The Human grabs Zakl's lower left Mandible, and pulls with all of its force. The mandible falls off, and blood gushes. Zakl, in return, halts in killing the human to let out a deep scream in both terror and pain.

Luka took a step forward, he was not going to let these Humans take his kill. Before Luka's cover is blown, however, Zakl gets impaled from a human who is also using active camo. Luka's eyes widen, as he is angered, and filled with rage.

"Zakl is my kill!" Luka thinks, and starts to head over to them. While he goes over, the Human who stole his prize helped the other Human up, and they got into the escape pod. It then jettisoned.

This whole battle, from the moment Luka got here, until now, only took less than thirty seconds. That was how long it took the mighty hero of the Covenant to fall.

Luka strode over to the body of his fallen commander; his enemy. However, much to Luka's amazement, and surprise, the stab wound was not fatal. Not as long as Zakl got help before to long. Luka grunted, upset. His revenge would have to wait.

Luka looks in Zakl's eyes, and sees Sher. Ohh, how he misses his wife. But Zakl would pay for his crime against Luka soon enough. Luka grabbed Zakl, and flung him over his arm. He then regrouped with Alei, who had seemed to lose all of his Unggoy forces.

"The Mgalekgolo were called into help fight against the demon." Alei said, before shockingly realizing Zakl's injured body being carried by Luka.

"The demon is here?" Luka asks, worried. Luka knew that there were multiple "Spartans", as they were called by the Human faction. And Luka also knew that not many Covenant, Sangheili included, survived encounters with them.

Alei nodded as Luka shoved it off.

"We need to get the commander back to the ship and healed." Luka says.

Zakl, still apparently conscious, grunts.

"I can walk, minor. I can still fight, but require slight medical assistance first." Zakl said, getting on his feet. His long fingers covered his wounds, and he grunted in pain.

"Let's get back to the ship then." Alei says, and the three head to the hanger, where the Covenant had docked an emergency ship.

Luka helped the shipmaster there. His revenge would have to wait. He would soon, however, gut Huskalee like a dog.

4. War destroys peace and beauty

Ace had blacked out somewhere on the way down. She remembered looking out the window to see the ship she had spent the past couple of weeks on, the ship that had narrowly escaped a dying planet, crash to the unknown world below. If this even was a world.

It is obviously not your average planet, as evidenced by the ring shape. This giant ring in the middle of space not only seemed as if it had its own flora and fauna, but it also looked veryâ€¦ unnatural. This ring was not guaranteed to support her and her squad. She had guessed it had oxygen, but did not know for sure. She would have to, unfortunately, have to bet her life on it.

These were the thoughts that raced through her mind before her pod began to shake. She had lost consciousness for the landing. Upon waking, she was still strapped into her pod. She heard faint gunfire in the background, and began to open her eyes.

In front of her was a human, wearing the standard ODST helmet. It was George. "Storm!" He shouted. Ace blinked. "Storm, wake up, quick!" He repeated. Still tired, Ace slowly started to fully awake, finally getting her hearing back to its peak.

She moved her head, and looked around. The pod was open, and outside she could see grass. Mountains. Green. Ace rubbed her eyes. She did not expect it to be soâ€¦ beautiful. Then, she heard the shots being fired again.

"We need you, commander! You're in charge now! Daniel and Paris went outside and got pinned behind a rock. It's the Covenant." George told her. She was fully awake now, and reached for the pistol on her thigh.

Upon grasping the metal, hard grip in her gloved hand, she pulled it into an offensive position as she used her other hand to unbuckle herself. Her belt was jammed. 'Perfectâ€¦' Ace thinks, and butts the belt multiple times with her gun.

"Tell Paris to provide cover fire. You and I need better cover." Ace tells George.

George nods, and there is silence. He is communicating through his helmet. Ace looked at her full body armoured comrade and realized she was all but naked next to him. Only wearing a jumpsuit, she was vulnerable to any plasma, bulletsâ€¦ or anything else to potentially hit her. She secured her helmet on her head, and readied up. This was all she would haveâ€¦

"I am sorry, Ralph." Ace muttered, paying her respects to her commanding officer, now KIA. She readied her pistol a second time to make sure everything was properly working, then turned to George. He

nodded to her, and she sprinted out of the pod.

Around her were hills, trees, rivers—everything they had on Earth. It was beautiful, like Reach before the covenant tore it to shreds. Ace gulped, and found cover immediately. She sprinted for it while Daniel and Paris provided cover fire. She got to the cover, and George was right behind her.

"How many tangos?" Ace asked George.

"Hard to say, but Paris thought she saw three."

Ace grunted. She looked up, and a bullet from a covenant carbine whizzed by her head.

"Must be Jackles—and lousy shots too." Ace thinks to herself with a smirk.

"Alright team, I got the approximate locations of the tangos. Paris, you guys take out target one. George, help them out. I will draw their fire, and when target one is down move to two then three. Understood?" Ace asked after marking where she believed the targets would be. Three acknowledgement lights winked, and Ace did a barrel roll to the side of her cover, firing in the direction of each of the targets.

She missed by a longshot, but Paris and Daniel seemed to have taken care of the first. As Ace rolled behind a rather large tree, she heard more shots from human weapons. The ODST's HUD displayed two of the targets eliminated. As she turned to aim at the third, Ace got shot at. She took cover again quickly, barely dodging it. A human sniper went off.

Paris killed the last one. Ace clicked her com twice, awaiting an all clear signal. She got it. The four remaining Hell Frogs met behind the cover George was currently at.

"This place is beautiful." George commented, taking off his helmet. Paris and Ace followed suit, while Daniel walked around the group, making sure the area was actually secure.

"It is a warzone now and an unidentified—whatever the hell this is." Paris replied. George had always been one to appreciate the beauty in things like this. He was like Ace in that way. Paris did not care as much for the beauty which was destroyed by war. She only cared about helping the people. Which was not a bad thing.

Ace nodded. "Maybe it could have been settled by humans. That doesn't seem possible now." George replied.

Ace looked around, having an uneasy feeling. She saw the beauty of this world, her crashed pod, and Daniel walking around. Something wasn't right.

"What's the plan, sir?" George asked, looking at Ace. Paris followed suit.

"Wait—where is—" Ace started to ask, then she heard a weapon drop. All three of the Frogs looked back, to see Daniel slowly rising off the ground. Then an Elite coming out of active camo.

Daniel was being grabbed- picked up, by his throat. The Elite holding him activated his sword.

"You humans taint this ring with your blasphemy! I shall cleanse this Halo of you wretched filth!" He shouted, and prepared to kill Daniel Miles.

End
file.